



SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER



The Zero Waste Schools newsletter will help you get your school on a path toward generating zero waste through waste prevention, recycling, composting, and food recovery. You'll also find resources that connect zero waste to healthy eating, school gardens, and environmental education and action.

Share the newsletter with friends, colleagues, and students interested in zero waste.

[Sign up for ZWS news](#)

Lincolnshire-Prairie View District 103 goes for zero waste



September is an exciting month in [Lincolnshire-Prairie View School District 103](#)! With guidance from SGA's [Zero Waste Schools](#) team, all three schools in this K-8 district of approximately 2,000 students will roll out commercial composting and recycling in their lunchrooms over the next two weeks. Each school will

introduce sorting stations in the cafeteria and all students will be trained on the how and why of using them.

SGA began working with one of the district's schools prior to the pandemic. As schools started shifting back to pre-COVID mealtime procedures this past spring, the district decided they would be ready to go for zero waste in the fall at all three of their schools. Going district-wide with the program presents great opportunities for streamlining standard operating procedures for waste reduction and gives all students the same opportunity to take climate action every day.

Stay tuned to hear more about the launch of zero waste lunchrooms in D103!

Illinois Green Schools Project

The Illinois Green Alliance's [2022-23 Illinois Green Schools Project](#) is a challenge for K-12 schools to devise and implement creative no- to low-cost energy, water and waste initiatives and sustainable practices. This year's optional theme is "Path to Zero."



School registration ends Sept. 12. Contact Liz Wimmer at lwimmer@illinoisgreenalliance.org with questions or for more

ILLINOIS GREEN SCHOOLS PROJECT

It's time to register for the Great Apple Crunch!



The Illinois Great Apple Crunch is an annual celebration of fresh, local apples that takes place during National Farm to School Month on the second Thursday of October. **This year's Crunch will take place on Thursday, Oct. 13.**

The Illinois Crunch is part of the Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch, which is also celebrated in the neighboring states of Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and new this year, Iowa! Beginning in 2015 with just 45,000 kids and

growing to a whopping 605,000 participants in 2019, the Illinois Great Apple Crunch has engaged kids all across Illinois.

All K-12 schools, early childhood sites, boarding facilities, community programs, businesses, and organizations across Illinois are invited to celebrate the 2022 Crunch. Participants are encouraged to include educational enrichment activities to promote healthy eating habits and share knowledge about where food comes from.

Can't Crunch on **Thursday, Oct. 13**? Crunch anytime in October and share your Crunch on social media by tagging [@GreatAppleCrunch](#).

Click [HERE](#) and join the celebration!

National Walk & Roll to School Day

The 26th annual [National Walk & Roll to School Day](#) is on **Wednesday, Oct. 12.**

These fun events can be a tool to inspire lasting change while reducing reliance on cars, addressing the need to make routes to school safer, and encouraging children to be more active. [Register](#) to participate as a school, a neighborhood, or a family.



While the official National Walk & Roll to School Day is on Oct. 12, communities are welcome to celebrate any day in October that best fits their schedules.

SWANCC grants and educational opportunities



Waste Reduction Grant Program

PreK-12th grade public or private schools in SWANCC-member communities are eligible. Grant funds may be used to start or

expand programs and projects focused on preventing waste – reusing items and recycling materials or composting food waste on-site or through a commercial service provider.

Application deadline: Oct. 21. Learn more and apply [HERE](#).

Early Childhood Program

SWANCC is now offering new digital learning opportunities for preschool and kindergarten students. In lieu of the in-person presentations that were hosted in the past, the Early Childhood program has refocused to offer simple, flexible educational resources that are convenient and can be implemented all year long. For more information, contact Theresa Greinig at Theresa@swancc.org.

Plastic Free Lunch Day

Join Cafeteria Culture and schools around the country by hosting a [Plastic Free Lunch Day](#) at

your school on **Wednesday, November 2.**

Plastic Free Lunch Day

Plastic Free Lunch Day a day to encourage the elimination of single-use plastics during lunch (or use as few as possible) in both lunches served at school and lunches brought from home. It's an opportunity to try new ways of doing things. Even if your school experiments with eliminating just one type of commonly used plastic, it can have a big impact if adopted long-term.

Cafeteria Culture's Plastic Free Lunch Day [resource page](#) is filled with information to support your event, including flyers, plastic surveys, and letter templates. Hosting a screening of their award-winning film [Microplastic Madness](#) would be a great way to jump-start your efforts.

Here are a few ideas to reduce plastic waste in lunches served at school:

- Eliminate condiment packets; use refillable squeeze bottles or bulk dispensers.
- Offer sporks and napkins individually so students can take only the items they need.
- Make straws available on request, rather than as part of a spork packet.
- Replace single-use utensils with reusable utensils, if your school has a dishwasher.

Pumpkin Smash 2022



Don't trash it, Smash it! Facilitated by our friends at SCARCE, [Pumpkin Smash](#) is an annual effort to divert pumpkins from landfills by providing locations for residents to drop off jack-o-lanterns to be composted.

This year's Pumpkin Smash will take place on **Saturday, Nov. 5.** It's a great project for school environmental or service clubs and community

groups.

Interested in hosting a Pumpkin Smash at your school or in your neighborhood? Since city approvals must be submitted to your county recycling coordinator at least **30 days in advance** of the event, now is the time to start planning! Refer to SCARCE's [How to Host a Pumpkin Collection](#) guide for more information and register your site [HERE](#).

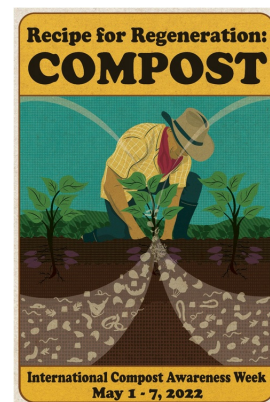
International Compost Awareness Week 2023 poster & video contests

Know any creative students who'd like to help spread the word about the benefits of composting? Encourage them to enter this year's [International Compost Awareness Week \(ICAW\) poster and video contests](#).

The contests are open now through Nov. 1, 2022.

All entries should highlight the theme of ICAW 2022: *For Healthier Soil, Healthier Food...Compost!* ICAW is May 7-13, 2023.

Poster contest: Anyone around the world age 14 or older may enter. The winning poster will be reproduced and distributed to thousands nationwide to promote ICAW and will be featured on the Compost Research & Education Foundation website and the US Composting Council website. The winner will receive a \$500 prize.



Video contest: Anyone in grades 4–8 or ages 10–13 may enter. Videos must be 30 seconds or less. All video entries will be shown on the ICAW YouTube channel. The winning video will be highlighted on the ICAW website. The winner will receive \$100.

Grants and other opportunities

CHS Foundation Classroom Grant CHS Foundation provides \$500 grants each year to PreK-12 teachers who have classroom projects that use agricultural concepts to teach reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and more. **Deadline: Sept. 15.**

Get Schools Cooking Grant This 3-year grant program by the Chef Ann Foundation is designed to guide districts across the country through the process of becoming a sustainably-run, scratch-cook operation. The program includes detailed district assessments, strategic planning, technical assistance, evaluations, and systems grants to cover items like equipment, staff training, and data solutions. **Deadline: Sept. 30.**

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom offers two grants:

- Teacher Project Grants provide up to \$300 to PreK-12th grade teachers for projects that promote agricultural literacy in the classroom. **Deadline: Oct. 14.**
- Teacher Book Grants provide up to \$250 in books from a pre-selected list of titles to help teachers integrate agriculture into their curricula. **Deadline: Oct. 14.**

Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant Applicants must use native Illinois plants in their wildlife habitat area and be prepared to maintain and commit resources to the project for at least five years. Projects need to be implemented on school grounds or another public place. **Deadline: Nov. 30.**

Whole Kids Foundation Salad Bar Grant Any district or independent school participating in the National School Lunch Program can apply. The grant program donates salad bars to U.S. schools to give kids daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

Events

Faith in Place's 2022 Green Team Summit

Sept. 11-14

Join Faith in Place to experience diverse faith and spiritual practices and learn how they interweave with environmental care. The free summit will feature six sessions, diverse speakers, and plenty of opportunities for networking. The summit will be 100% available online, with regional watch parties hosted in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin.

Go Green Illinois September Meeting

Sept. 13, 1-3 pm

Join **Go Green Illinois** for an important discussion about the **plastic crisis**. Learn about legislation to reduce the inflow of single-use plastics and how community groups are working to bring reuse back into the economy. Guest speakers include Megan Wolff, Policy Director at Beyond Plastics; Macy Zander, Reuse Communities Policy & Engagement Officer at Upstream; Jennifer Walling, Executive Director of Illinois Environmental Council; and Jordan Parker of the Coalition for Plastic Reduction. A special thank you to Seema Keshav of Go Green Vernon Hills-Lincolnshire for organizing this program.

USDA Food Loss and Waste Innovation Fair

Sept. 14, 9 am-1 pm CST

This free event will showcase the latest food loss and waste mitigation technologies, programs, and innovations and is perfect for businesses, nonprofits, researchers, food sector leaders, and individuals.

September Adopt-a-Beach: A Great Lakes Day of Action

Sept. 17

Join thousands of Adopt-a-Beach volunteers to clean and celebrate Great Lakes shorelines

Reuse-a-Palooza!

Oct. 2, 11 am-3 pm, The Plant, 1400 W. 46th St., Chicago IL 60609

This event will provide opportunities to repair clothing and household items, donate gently used items, safely dispose of tricky-to-recycle items, and learn about strategies to avoid waste.



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